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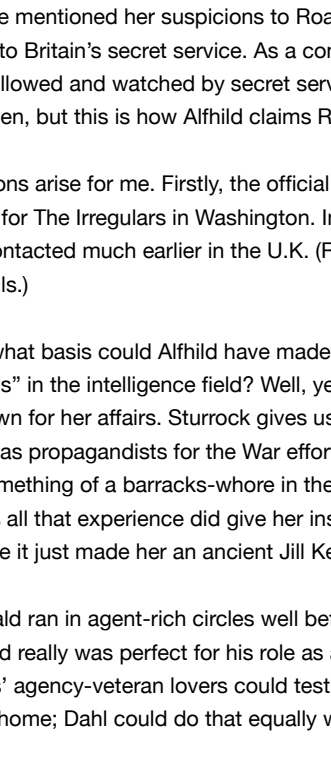
A.NOLEN

Assaulting Mt. Helicon: Writing and Current Affairs.

monthly archives: JANUARY 2013

A TANGLED WEB



Storyteller, by Donald Sturrock.

Have I got a good one for you today folks.

I read Roald Dahl's authorized biography and despite my intention not to talk about the seamy side of his life, something has jumped up and punched me between the eyes.

Alfhild Dahl, Roald's elder sister, tells Sturrock a story about how Roald first became involved in espionage. She claims that Roald befriended a couple on his trip back from Egypt in 1941: the husband was British, the wife half-German, half-Japanese.

This well-heeled and cosmopolitan couple became good friends with Alfhild and Roald; they all traveled in the same circles in London.

Well, one day Alfhild got the idea that this couple were actually spies for Vichy France. She mentioned her suspicions to Roald, who promptly reported the couple to Britain's secret service. As a consequence of this action, Roald was followed and watched by secret servicemen himself. No more detail is given, but this is how Alfhild claims Roald *got noticed*.

Several questions arise for me. Firstly, the official history is that Roald was recruited for The Irregulars in Washington. In fact, we now know that he was contacted much earlier in the U.K. (Read Sturrock's book for all the details.)

Secondly, on what basis could Alfhild have made her judgement? Did she have any "ins" in the intelligence field? Well, yes she did. Alfhild was a party-girl known for her affairs. Sturrock gives us a list of her lovers, the majority worked as propagandists for the War effort. In fact, Alfhild comes across as something of a barracks-whore in the intelligence community. Perhaps all that experience did give her insight into espionage– or maybe it just made her an ancient Jill Kelley.

Alfhild and Roald ran in agent-rich circles well before Roald's posting to D.C. Roald really was perfect for his role as an agent provocateur: Alfhilds' agency-veteran lovers could testify to that. Alfhild shook her ass back home; Dahl could do that equally well in 'Caput Mundi'.

So, at Sis's suggestion, Dahl reported their friends to the powers that be. Who were this couple?

They had to be wealthy, otherwise they wouldn't be traveling at such a time. They had to be well-connected and privileged, considering that they ran in culturally-elite circles. They were also unusual: a Japanese-German married to an Englishman, with clearance to travel during war-time. (Remember that the UK and USA were running 'internment camps' for people who they SUSPECTED of having ties with Germany or Japan.) This couple also had to have some ties with Vichy France.

Do I know of any Japanese-Germans who were wealthy, privileged, could run with the in-crowd in London, and *yet* were connected with Vichy France? Hmmm.

'Coulda been one of Coudenhove-Kalergi's daughters. And if it was, it was probably Ida.

Coudenhove-Kalergi was an Austro-Hungarian nobleman and diplomat who took a lot a pride in the diversity of his ancestry. In a seeming attempt to one-up his forefathers, he married a Japanese woman against her family's wishes. In fact, Coudenhove-Kalergi had to call in some political favors to force the marriage through. The couple ha

several children back in Austria; Ida was the only daughter to distinguish herself.

Ida was very active in the German Youth Movement. She was also a strong supporter of the Catholic Church; though her views were not catholic. She is better described as a Unitarian Universalist.

This is how Ludwig von Mises describes the German Youth Movement:

> *The chiefs of the youth movement were mentally unbalanced neurotics. Many of them were affected by a morbid sexuality; they were either profligate or homosexual. None of them excelled in any field of activity or contributed anything to human progress. Their names are long since forgotten; the only trace they left were some books and poems preaching sexual perversity. But the bulk of their followers were quite different. They had one aim only: to get a job as soon as possible with the government. Those who were not killed in the wars and revolutions are today pedantic and timid bureaucrats in the innumerable offices of the German* Zwangswirtschaft*. They are obedient and faithful slaves of Hitler. But they will be no less obedient and faithful handy men of Hitler's successor, whether he is a German nationalist or a puppet of Stalin.*

Despite Ida's involvement in this organization, she wrote and was published throughout the span of the Third Reich, though her ideas were certainly not 'nazi'. After the end of the war, Ida was welcomed into the bosom of the American literary establishment, her Nazi-era masterwork, *The Hidden Face*, was translated and published by Pantheon.

Ida's book *The Hidden Face* was first published in Germany in 1944; a large part of the research was probably done between '39 and '44. The book is about Saint Therese of Lisieux, the young nun who died and was transformed by her mother-superior into a cult figure. Saint Therese lived in Lisieux, which in the early 1940s, was in the heart of Vichy France.

The 1959 version of Ida's book is careful not to mention *where* she did her research, but she clearly has intimate knowledge of the original source material regarding St. Therese.

So: privileged, rich, well-connected, connection to Vichy France… yes, all there for little Ida. What about that Englishman-husband?

Ida did marry: a German engineer called Goerres, but he doesn't seem to have meant much to her. In fact, Ida was underwhelmed by the institution of marriage in general: she saw it as a means to an end. Her work with the Youth Movement, the Catholic Church and women's issues devoured all her energy. Did she have time for anything else, I wonder?

IF Dahl did report Ida and her Englishman, who was her Englishman? Could he have been some sort of handler? Did Dahl, neophyte to espionage, report a British double-agent to the British?

IF Ida was a double agent, it would explain the ease with which she and her family moved during and after the war. In fact, her brother became quite powerful.

IF Dahl did make this *faux pas*, it would explain Alfhild's reluctance to name names. Roald's actions would have been a great embarrassment to him later in life… perhaps guilt and embarrassment weighed on his conscience?

In the 1959 edition of *The Hidden Face*, Ida lists the book *Saints for Now* as one of her sources, though I can't find where she actually used information from it. *Saints for Now* was edited by Clare Boothe Luce, and first published in 1952. Ida Goerres' knowledge of the subject far outweighed Clare Luce's; why would Ida mention an inferior book that was published eight years after her original work on St. Therese? What connection can these two women possibly have?

A short excerpt for Roald Dahl's authorized biography:

> *His date for that evening was the actress Nancy Carroll, a thirty-nine year old divorcee, but at the party afterwards it was Congresswoman Clare Booth [sp] Luce, the wife of the owner of Time and Life magazines and a vituperative critic of Henry Wallace's, who caught Dahl's eye.*
>
> *Mrs. Luce, a reluctant anglophile, quickly succumbed to the allure of the glamorous young air attache, thirteen years younger than she was, and Dahl did not return home that night. "I got home to the house of my host at 9 AM the next morning," he told his mother, "and failed to make my room without being seen to ruffle the bedclothes… I had to do a lot of talking to re-establish my reputation." Later, Creekmore Fath claimed that the embassy encouraged the liaison in the hope that Dahl would convert Mrs. Luce to a more pro-British position…*

A few years later and Mrs. Luce's into saints…

Could it be that an uneasy conscience led Dahl to unwise pillow-talk? Or was it just an uncontrollable desire to name-drop? What business does Clare Boothe Luce– a very recent Catholic convert– have editing a compendium of Saints' lives? Perhaps we'll never know.

P.S. If you're interested, a (not exhaustive) list of Alfhild's lovers:

William Walton, composer.

Arthur Bryant, historian.

and probably Alfred Tregear Chenhalls, since she was the only Dahl sister not to booby-trap her door against him.

Roald was good friends with Leslie Howard's business manager, a man named Alfred Tregear Chenhalls. Chenhalls was a creepy individual;

Dahl's younger sisters barricaded their doors against him at night when he visited the family. Both Howard and Chenhalls were killed when their plane was shot down by the Luftwaffe, probably because of their propaganda activities.

A perfect circle of friends for a double agent, I'd say…

LEAVE A COMMENT

A NEW CHALLENGE

Never one to stint on the good stuff.

I had a talk with local writer-friend a few days ago, it turns out that we have similar tastes in reading. He's an Ian Flemming fan, while I'm a Roald Dahl fan (though you'd be forgiven for thinking the opposite). These two authors are not so far apart, for reasons that I've discussed ad nauseam.

We both appreciate the *Twilight Zone* for it's storytelling.

We both try to improve our ability to tell stories, though I think my friend's quite a bit farther down that road than I am. That's the crux of this post– improving ability to tell stories.

I'm going to analyze one good story a week. That's (probably) all you'll hear from me for a few months. I'm going to break down why each of these stories works. My challenge to myself is this: be a plot-guru by the end of May.

At the moment, I write about things that I feel strongly about. This tendency is equivalent to putting the cart before the horse, because I'm motivated by how I feel and not by how entertaining my writing is.

The fact is, nobody really cares about my opinion or my feelings. If they did, then literary magazines would have more readers. Feelings and opinions are luxuries for a writer. Maybe I can afford to add a dash of those things once I've paid my dues with plot and character. But only after I've paid my dues.

Therefore, I need to spend less time blogging and more time reading, then analyzing. This will be six months of my life well spent.

Lesson One.

Taste, by Roald Dahl. (I'm sure that you can find the full text somewhere online.)

This story is one of Dahl's betting stories, the most famous of which is probably *Man from the South*, which was made into a *Twilight Zone* episode, if memory serves. (Correction: Dahl wrote for *Way Out*, then *Tales of the Unexpected*, not *The Twilight Zone*. *Man from the South* was part of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*.) The emotional action, the roller-coaster, comes from this bet. The story begins with a lead-in to the bet, and ends abruptly, but satisfyingly, with the bet's conclusion.

The bet takes place between two characters, a gourmand and a stockbroker. The two men bet over the provenance of a bottle of wine. Both men want what the other one has; the gourmand wants the stockbroker's daughter and the stockbroker wants the cultural prestige of the gourmand. Since prestige can't be bought so simply, the stakes of the bet are as follows: if the gourmand guesses the correct vintage, then he gets to marry the stockbroker's daughter. If not, the stockbroker gets the gourmand's two houses.

I believe that Dahl began to write this story with just these ideas. Two rather gross characters who make an ugly bet. Next, he chose the ending: The gourmand guesses correctly, but does so by cheating and is discovered.

Everything else in this story revolves around heightening the stakes of the bet *for the reader*.

1) description of the two characters involved. Dahl chose 'toad' for the gourmand and 'unscrupulous climber' for the stockbroker. AND THAT'S IT. Dahl revels in the Dickens-like 2-D quality of these characters. He's set up two people that the reader will enjoy seeing fall down.

2) explanation of wine-tasting art. How talented is the gourmand? Dahl leads us to believe that he is very talented indeed. *Will he pull it off?* I wonder…

3) desirability of daughter. This is done well– Dahl makes her believable and sympathetic, not over-honeyed. She has a good sense of right and wrong, but smokes and isn't bright. She 'leans away' from both

men, as the reader would.

The motivation for this story is: how will the bet end? At different points, I was convinced that the stockbroker would win, then the gourmand. Finally, when I am confident that the gourmand has won, in steps the maid who saw him peek at the bottle before dinner.

This is a twist ending, but a good one, because it follows naturally from the characters and the situation. Both men are swine. They've made a habit of betting on wine. On reflection, it's natural that one (or both!) would eventually decide to cheat. That's why Dahl's twist ending isn't annoying, on the contrary, the ending is insightful. On rereading the story, he's dropped a couple hints about the venal nature of both men, so I don't feel cheated by this unexpected ending.

There's nothing in this story that doesn't drive the emotional roller-coaster *for the reader*. It's spare prose. If Dahl does present an opinion, it's about finance and foodies AND it's woven into the story so well that his opinion isn't glaringly obvious. It's subtle, and that's the best place for politics in fiction.

Dahl's place as a narrator is subtle too. He's a guest at the party, but rarely breaks the story with his opinion or mention of "I". He lets the characters do the talking.

Conclusion: Dahl started with the idea of WINE BET, then developed two simple– but similar– characters, GOURMAND and STOCKBROKER. Everything that happens is a natural, and insightfully-chosen, consequence of these two characters and their appetites. The twist comes from a deeper understanding of the two men's nature than the reader expects.

2 COMMENTS

BANNED BOOKS

And what would Orwell say about that, Ms. Librarian?

I was browsing through my copy of *The Fatal Eggs and Other Soviet Satire* yesterday, and I was struck by the number of Soviet authors who were published and then had their writing condemned as anti-revolutionary.

Just to be clear: they were published, then censured.

So, some brave publisher put their neck on the line to publish material that the government found offensive.

It struck me that I've never heard of that happening in the United States. Now maybe that's because Washington, and its army of lawyers, have a deep respect for freedom of speech and would never dream of leaning on a publisher that spoke truth to power. If that's the case, then "America, f*ck yeah!"

The other, more troubling, possibility is that politically-incorrect books aren't being published. That's scary. As someone who's grown up with rhetorical questions like "Is this Soviet Russia?" bandied about whenever the issue of censorship arises, I find it unsettling to consider that, perhaps, Soviet Russia had more intellectual freedom than the US has.

So what does book-banning look like in the US of A?

The most visible source for information on 'banned books' is the American Library Association's "Banned Book" database; you can find information here.

The ALA is a non-governmental organization which is endorsed by the Library of Congress (the government). If you are unfamiliar with the United States, private grant-giving institutions often work hand-in-hand with government ones, particularly federal government institutions. This is a cornerstone of the American way of life.

The "Banned Book" database isn't really a database on banned books, it's a database on individuals or organizations who *challenge* books that are used in schools and libraries. So books on the 'banned' list haven't been banned, just questioned. In the ALA's own words:

> *While books have been and continue to be banned, part of the Banned Books Week celebration is the fact that, in a majority of cases, the books have remained available.*

To put that another way, the "Banned Books" database is a way for the ALA and its endorsing body, the US government, to keep track of which

little guys are complaining about the books that they (the government/ALA) have already explicitly or implicitly approved. Check out the list of 'banned' classics, and decide for yourself what's going on.

Also troubling to me, the ALA seems to have selective amnesia. While they carefully document some complaints against classics, I couldn't find one mention of the wide-scale German-language book burning that occurred in America during WWII. (My own home town had a particularly nasty episode of that.) Surely this type of censorship deserves some mention? I mean, the ALA has had 30 years to flesh out the history of censorship in America. Do I have to quit my day job and do this research for them?

Back to the 'banned' classics list. Calling any of these books 'banned' sounds hysterical to me, but the verbiage is the ALA's, not mine. The organization seems particularly concerned with certain types of complaints, check out the Online Challenge Reporting Form's 'Grounds for Challenge' section.

So, what does book-banning look like in America?

Book-banning is dead in America; at best, it's something that backward, little people unsuccessfully try to implement.

Banned Books? There's nothing to talk about because the US government doesn't ban books. Did you hear me? THEY DON'T BAN BOOKS. Not like those nut-balls in Soviet Russia, anyway. (Though the FBI will watch what you're reading at the local library…)

All of this leaves a bad taste in my mouth, almost as if there may be double standards for free-speech in America. As though some speech is protected, and other types are *monitored* at best; denied at worst.

I'd feel a lot better if, occasionally, the great and good would make a fracas about something one of the Big Five (is it still five?) has published. Instead there seems to be silence, silence, silence– or meaningless back-cover blabber.

I don't want to imply that American literature lacks "shocking" or "controversial"– we've got more than our fair share of that. The trouble is, all of our "shocking" or "controversial" is shocking in ways that are acceptable to the Ford Foundation, etc. An example of acceptably shocking: explicit sex or swearing. Read the 'banned' classics list for more examples of politically-correct 'controversial' material.

If, in fact, there is censorship in American publishing, we wouldn't be the first superpower to do it. However, very few governments have so much of their credibility vested in being pro-free-speech. Orwell's concept of "double-think" springs to mind…

Thanks to http://exploresewickley.com for the insightful cartoon.

1 COMMENT

SPOOKY IN A GHOSTY WAY

My husband had a violently negative reaction to the ending of *Haunt*. Top complaints:

1) What's going on?

2) Nothing happens.

3) I don't care about Tim, or anybody else.

Ouch.

So, first on the list. This was supposed to be a ghost story. Tim, the ethically-challenged art dealer, is haunted by the ghost of a lover/patron who he used. The ghost of Lillian was supposed to provide the crisis points that drove the story. I wanted her to be creepy, but not gory.

Roald Dahl says that good ghosts are written in this way:

> *The best ghost stories don't have ghosts in them. At least, you don't see the ghost. Instead you see only the result of his actions. Occasionally you can* feel *it brushing past you, or you are made aware of its presence by a subtle means. For example, the temperature in a room always drops dramatically when a ghost is around. This was scientifically proved by Harry Price in his book* The Most Haunted House in England*. If a story does permit a ghost to be seen, he doesn't look like one. He looks like an ordinary person. (From* Roald Dahl's Book of Ghost Stories*.)*

So, Tim's catatonic spells were actually periods of possession; though I wanted them to look like nasty flash-backs or, perhaps, mental illness.

I found this Dahl quote after the fact, the idea came to me from watching those terrible ghost detective shows on the History/Discovery channels. If these shows ever achieve scariness, it's when victims recount the first few spooky occurrences in their homes. Oh yeah, and demons are always spookier than ghosts, because they're not motivated like humans. You can't reason with them.

So that's what's going on. Each flash-back was a supposed to peak your interest about how and why. Clearly, I need to suggest the true nature of these flash-backs earlier on.

Second problem: nothing happens. What was supposed to motivate this story was the dark love story between Tim and Lillian, and the consequences of his actions. However, I didn't follow The Red Pen of Doom's advice and have emotional highs and lows. Tim started out anxious, he's anxious all the way through the story (except maybe for the brief high of his business success) and he ends really anxious.

I didn't want to have resolution at the story's end because I'm not sure Tim can have resolution. He can't undo what he's done. Frankly, the ghost of Lillian may drive them all crazy, and there would be some justice to that. However, it would be nice to think that there's some hope for Tim. So I left the ending unresolved.

CLANG! Selfishness in writing. I'm writing this story for somebody else's entertainment, not as a moral exercise for myself. I need to have Lillian exorcised or the family destroyed. I have to make a choice.

Third problem: I don't care about Tim.

I believe that there has to be one likable character in every story; otherwise why bother reading? I tried to trick readers into liking Tim by showing his deep love for his daughter Elsie. But, I don't think that this is enough, to quote the Good Book:

> *For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?*

So if even the Gentiles are doing it; it's not going to generate much fellow-feeling. In *Pests*, I conscientiously gave Tom a dog, Thor, for just this reason. It worked. I think that dogs are more sympathetic than offspring, because not everybody's good to dogs.

Tim's not very likable; his wife is a little annoying. Probably the most interesting character is Lillian, followed by Aunt Margo. So this story needs a major re-haul. I should probably start with Tim's boyhood ghost experience; but I need to spice that up a bit, it can't just be imaginary-friend-turned-prophet.

LEAVE A COMMENT

HAUNT, FINALE

This is the end of a serialized story, see part I, part II , part III , part IV and part V.

"It's better if you don't sleep just now, Tim," Aunt Margo refilled his cup of chamomile tea, "I think it's better that you tell me what's on your mind."

"Marge, sleep is what's on my mind. I've been in the hospital for the better part of two days. I'm tired."

Margo got up and returned her kettle to the ancient stove top. Whispers of steam wafted up from it's curved spout, and from somewhere inside its copper body, a regular tapping began. It must be the metal cooling, thought Tim, and he stared at the shiny kettle, tuning out his Aunts chatter behind him. Tap. Tap. Tap.

"Something's broken in your kettle, Marge. It's tapping."

"Yes I hear it. I like it." Tap. Tap.Tap.

"I kind of like it too. Was that great grandma's?"

"Yes. Grandpa brought it from England."

Tim was silent for a while, then spoke suddenly: "We would go for walks. Long walks– in the rain, sometimes. The rain was loud on the cobblestones," Tim drew his index finger along the edge of his teacup.

"Was this back in the city?"

"I couldn't live anywhere but the city."

Margo raised an eyebrow and suddenly became very still; she sensed that it was time to make her move.

"That's what I thought," said Margo cautiously, "Why don't you tell me more about it?"

"The worst thing about getting older is the loneliness. There are plenty of people around, that's not what I mean. What I mean is that the people are there but they are not there. Most of them weren't even born when I was dancing– they don't know me from Adam, really. But they've heard of the school, or one of my pupils, and they all want something. They're there but not really. I was very tired, but the walks made me feel better and Tim would do most of the talking."

"I would take a different route to the cafe every morning, though don't believe Tim noticed that. He's single minded. I liked it when my acquaintances saw us together; there's nothing like a young beau to prove that you're still vital. You shouldn't think too hard of me for that- it's hell when sharks smell blood in the water. Half of the battle is making them believe that one is still beautiful, still connected, still useful. Woe betide the artist who is no longer useful." Tim chuckled lightly.

"Who did you meet on these walks?"

"Oh, the usual. Orlove one day- a charming little man. He was going places. Marilynn, Alsdorf, that is. Aaron Fleischman. Even Rahm Emmanuel, before he became mayor. He was a danseur, before he joined the IDF."

"I'm surprised that you're interested in politics."

"An artist has to be."

"Tell me about the cafe."

"Oh, it's lovely. It's been there for years- they make real croissants. The real ones, do you know what I mean?"

"I think so, yes."

"Gorgeous, buttery. Tim and I, and whoever we happened to run into that day, would drink coffee and chat about, oh well, anything. Usually that week's gossip. Never any shortage of that. Tim was always very discreet. I liked that about him. He would hear all these delectable tidbits, yet I never heard him repeat any."

"Smart boy."

"Very smart. Soon people didn't want to talk about me, or my school, anymore. They just wanted to talk about the gallery. I did a rather good job on that." Tim chuckled again.

"You did. You did do a very good job for him on that."

"It was easy. He was unusually humble. I don't mean the cheap variety, the type of humility that is a cop-out. He could be very aggressive, even confrontational. He was humble inwardly, he didn't let success get to his head. He was aware of the precariousness of his situation and played his part flawlessly. I know all about that."

BANG! Aunt Margo's front door slammed and interrupted their conversation.

"Are you two in the kitchen?" Fiona's voice called from the living room.

"Yes, sweetie but give us another minute okay?"

"Fine. I'm going to get Elsie upstairs." The sound of footsteps climbed up over the Tim and his Aunt's heads.

"Where were we?"

"I tried never to take anything for granted, Aunt Margo. I knew that and I thought that she knew that too."

"What makes you think that she didn't?" The abrupt change in perspective took Margo aback. *I've lost her*, Margo thought, *but maybe that's alright now*… Marge suspected that she already knew what she needed to know.

"Neediness," Tim continued. " She didn't seem to understand when we were done."

"Do you think that she felt used, Tim?" Tim didn't answer.

"Do you think that she used you?"

"We probably used each other, yes. It's hard for these old artists to stay vital; they loose their own shine when they come into money, then they need to bask in somebody else's glow in order to stay relevant."

"How did she come into money?"

A slow smile spread across her nephew's face, "She was never badly off. She had too many NEA friends for that. But she really scored when she took up with one of the Rockefellers. It's kinda an open secret. She did some teaching in Europe for a while and when she came back, there was plenty for the school, etc. To her credit, she didn't blow through what he gave her. She built on it."

"I don't think that's very uncommon," said it aunt quietly.

"I don't think so either."

"So why is she still here, Tim?"

"Because I never went to her again. After the party I never went to her again." Tim's breathing was deep and slow, he stared blankly out the window, out into the orchard beyond Margo's house. Margo watched her nephew. His father was like that too, flashed through her mind, Not vicious enough to match his charm. Margo's hand reached out to take her nephews, but she was startled by a sound from the living room. Plop, plop plop plop. It sounded as though someone spilled dried beans on the wooden floor.

"Did Fiona come back downstairs?" Margo asked Tim. "Fiona!" she called, but nobody answered.

"I didn't hear her," Tim answered slowly didn't break his stare, "Not that it matters anymore."

"How could you say that, Tim?"

"I'm never going to get rid of her, and my problem is just going to get worse."

"We will get rid of her, my boy. And I know how." Aunt Margo gave him a kiss on his forehead, then left to rummage in the cupboards. "I had mice nest in the walls last winter, I wonder if they're into something out there. Probably that old fish tank of your uncle's." Margo found what she was looking for– a heavy rolling pin– and then made her way to the kitchen door. When she opened it, she saw Fiona standing frozen in the living room. The young woman's face was blank; Margo looked at Fiona's hand: What is that orange thing?

Fiona held her medicine container; the lid was off and the vial was empty. Then Margo heard shuffling below. Little Elsie was on the floor, busily picking up the cherry-red pills and popping them into her mouth.

LEAVE A COMMENT

LEAVE A COMMENT

anolen:

A fantastic– FANTASTIC– rant on what makes entertaining writing.

Originally posted on The Red Pen of Doom:

When was the last time you went to a movie and wanted to stay behind and watch it again?

What was the last political stump speech that made you laugh and cry and want to go knock on the doors of your neighbors to make sure they voted? When was the last time you read a newspaper story that built up to an amazing climax instead of petering off into boring little details?

More people are writing more things than ever before. Movies and TV shows, blogs and newspapers, hardcover novels and digital e-books. Yet most of it is forgettable. Trite. Boring.

It used to be, blockbuster movies were the ones that had amazing special effects.

STAR WARS showed us things we'd never seen before, like lightsabers. Who doesn't want a lightsaber?

JURASSIC PARK gave us dinosaurs that weren't claymation or puppets. Today, though, any old TV show can afford…

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@CUEwindsearch @rebrandingtime stinks to high heaven. It's a logistical nightmare to plan trips to these regions, let alone broadcasting. 3 days ago

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@CUEwindsearch @rebrandingtime cut to drift... that's original. I'll be good to see where they turn up next... Kyiv Post? :) 3 days ago

@CUEwindsearch @sarahcuda @rebrandingtime typical spook response to criticism. 3 days ago

Isn't this interesting! twitter.com/jlaws/status/5… 3 days ago

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Inspired by the work of SAUL BASS, ART GOODMAN, and DAVE NAGATA. Hitchcock typeface by MATT TERICH.
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